

Only a couple days elapsed before B found someone who wanted to explore the passage with us. B told me he talked to a few other people who couldn't make it because of scheduling conflicts. He said they really grilled him for information about the cave and about the passage. He would not tell them which cave it was to ensure that we explored it to our satisfaction before we made it known to the public. Even the guy who ended up going with us did not know which cave until we were very close to it. And he was sworn to secrecy that he would not reveal the location of the cave to anyone on the planet. I won't identify him by name, so I will just refer to him as "Joe". Joe, B and I set out early in the morning to make sure we could spend all the time we wanted in the new passage. When we got to the cave we were able to rig up and descend rather quickly. It helps when you don't have to haul half a hardware store down into the cave. Joe was impressed by our work. Even B and I took a minute to pat ourselves on the back for all of the hard work we put in. And for the fact that we made it through!

Joe is a rather thin caver who has had a lot of experience in caves. He said this might be the tightest squeeze he had been in, but it didn't bother him. I knew that physically he would be able to make it, since I was bigger than him and I made it. He was just as excited as us to get through and get caving. Maybe more. He quickly got ready and was waiting to hear what the plan of attack was going to be. I figured I would send him through first, since he was ready, and I would follow. B would pass our gear through and wait for us outside the passage. B would give us two hours to return. That was nice of B to go down into the cave and baby-sit us. It gets boring sitting there in a cave. With our plan set, we were ready to roll.

*It was, perhaps, irresponsible of us not to tell Joe about all of the unexplained events that occurred in the cave until after he had gone through. But what exactly to you tell someone? How many of the weird things did we need to reveal to him? We did not feel that we were in any danger or we would not go in the cave ourselves. So we did not tell him a thing prior to him entering Floyd's Tomb. Of course when we did tell him afterwards, it was*

*too late.*

*I couldn't believe how easy Joe slipped through the passage. He said it was tight, but it sure didn't look like it. Once he got in we passed him his gear, then I started in. Even though I knew that I could fit through it was still a slow trip through the Tomb. You can only go so fast when you're scooting with your toes. When I reached the tight spot of the squeeze I had Joe snap a picture of me. I thought it would make a good photo. Once I got through B started to relay my stuff to me. Then disaster struck. I had gone all the way in and turned around to pull my gear through. I had to kneel down and still crouch down low. I had just got my helmet (ironically) and light and was turning around to feed the rope back to B when I smacked my head on the top of the passage. Human skull vs. solid rock. Rock won. I told B what had happened so he sent my first aid kit through. I was bleeding, but even worse I didn't feel too good. I patched myself up, then told Joe I didn't think I'd better continue. He looked like a little kid who was told that Christmas would be cancelled. Although I didn't like the idea of him exploring the cave without me (for selfish reasons, of course), I wanted him to at least see part of the cave for making the trip out there.*

I told him how far to go and how long it would take, then I sent him on his way. As I laid there I could hear him crawling into the darkness. His light disappeared after the first turn. I rested a minute or two, then began my journey back through the squeeze. It was disappointing to get all the way to the cave and then not be able to explore it to its end. Actually it is killing me! After I got through Floyd's Tomb (which was painful) I sat down and munched on a Clif bar while B and I chatted. I told him I would pay for a motel room if he would stay overnight. Then we could see how I was doing the next day and make another attempt at the cave. I felt goofy for having smacked my head on the cave wall. B said he was willing to give it another try tomorrow. He was just as anxious to put some closure to this cave. As long as Joe would stay overnight, we determined to wrap things up the next day. Once this was settled we just sat back and enjoyed the darkness. We could hear no sounds coming from the passage. The silence

reminded me of the scraping noise that I heard last time we were out there. I brought up the subject with B. Since I had not explored the cave completely I could not offer any explanation of what could be making the scraping noise. Or the change the wind strength. Or the rumbling. Or that terrible scream that we heard. Suddenly we both wished we had not sent Joe into the cave alone.

B went to the hole and yelled into it. "Joe". No answer. Not surprising. You just can't hear each other when you are very far apart in a cave. We nervously awaited any sounds (Good sounds, that is. Joe type sounds.) The twenty minute time limit we had set passed. Then twenty-five minutes. I really had no desire to climb back through the squeeze. My head was still throbbing and the squeeze looked tighter than ever. Still, I knew I was going to have to make sure Joe was safe. Just as I was getting prepared to go back through I saw a light deep in the passage. "Joe?", I called out. Nothing. "Joe!". Still no answer. The light got brighter and I could hear the noise of someone crawling across the broken rock that lined the cave. "You o.k., Joe?". "No", was his weak reply. When he got to the other side of the Tomb he said he was not feeling well. He quickly took his gear off and put them in the bag so we could pull it through. As I pulled the bag through the passage he began to climb back through the Tomb. We didn't even get a chance to question him about what he saw before he was coming back through. He quickly slipped through the squeeze and the hole and we finally got a look at him. He looked terrible. His face was pale and he was out of breath. The dust that covers the floor of the squeeze left its mark on his face and clothes. He had numerous small cuts and scratches on his face and arms. Probably from his rapid exit from the passage. His eyes were open wide.

We only had a brief moment to look at the change that had occurred to Joe before he started to head up and out of the cave, without saying a word. While Joe and B started for the surface I took a minute to gather our gear. Then I stopped to listen into the passage. I heard nothing. AND I FELT NOTHING! The wind had stopped! Part of me wanted to get out of the cave as fast as possible. But another part of me wanted to immediately climb

back through the passage to find out what made this cave tick. Then was not the time, though. I still felt a little dizzy from my injury. At that moment I noticed B and Joe had made good time getting up the cave passage and I was left alone. Chills ran through my body as I scurried to catch up with them.

Once we got outside the cave I figured we would be able to find out more from Joe. But when he got up the final climb he just unclipped from the rope and went straight to the truck. In the light of day he looked even worse than in the cave. B and I gathered up the rope and our gear and headed for the truck. Joe said he did not want to stay overnight because he felt terrible (and we believed him), so we headed home. We could get no more information from Joe. He just stared straight ahead. He was shaking like a leaf, and he said he was not cold. When we tried to question him, his answers were short. I asked him if he saw the hieroglyphics. "No". Did he hear us yelling? "No". Did he see the round rock? "No". Did he see the crystals? "No". He said he just went a little ways in and started to feel sick. Something was fishy about his answers. He would have had to have seen the crystals if he got far enough into the cave that he couldn't hear us yelling. But why would he not elaborate?

*The rest of the trip passed in eerie silence. Joe didn't say much else. We gave him a brief outline of the strange events that happened in the cave. He didn't reply. As we were dropping him off we asked if he wanted to go back in the cave. He shook his head and ran into his house. I tried to call him later in the day and the next day but only got his voice mail.*